



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Two maps at the end of the volume give at a glance the redistribution in county and borough representation effected by Gladstone's Redistribution Act of 1885, which was the complement of the Reform Act of 1884 under which the rural laborer was for the first time enabled to cast a vote. Another excellent map shows the expansion of the British Empire between 1837 and 1901. A useful feature of the volume as a book of reference is the table of the cabinets of Queen Victoria. This table is so arranged as to show the fluctuations as to cabinet rank of the holders of certain offices. The Postmaster-General, for example, was a cabinet minister during just about half of the queen's reign, and it frequently happened that in the same administration the Postmaster-General was not continuously a member of the cabinet. The section on authorities which is compiled in accordance with the plan adopted at the outset of the *Political History* is of great value to students. Though its critical treatment of the sources is of the briefest, it is pertinent and illuminating; and in spite of the omission of many works that might have been mentioned, it must be acknowledged to be both comprehensive and fairly exhaustive.

A. G. PORRITT.

The Letters of Queen Victoria. A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the Years 1837 and 1861. In three volumes. Edited by ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON, M.A., and Viscount ESHER, G.C.V.O., K.C.B. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1907. Pp. xix, 641; xiv, 575; xi, 657.)

FROM the point of view of students of English political history and also of the politics of Continental Europe of the middle years of the nineteenth century, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of this first installment of Queen Victoria's letters. The editors in their preface intimate that in making their selections from the letters, which belong to the period between the queen's accession in 1837 and the death of the prince consort in 1861, their purpose was to publish such letters as would bring out the queen's character and disposition. Their aim, they add, was to produce a book for the British people rather than to make a special appeal to the students of political history. By their selection the editors have raised a monument to the queen's capability, her sincerity, her sense of the duties and responsibilities of the sovereign, and her great moral worth. They have also given the world a book which must long overtop in historical importance any British political memoirs that have issued from the press. The queen's letters stand alone. They are in a class by themselves; and they must continue to hold their unique position in the political literature of England at least until the *Letters of George III.*, equally well edited and on a correspondingly large scale, are at last made available for students of British and American history.

It is indicative of the newer attitude towards political biography and

memoirs that so little delay has attended the publication of these volumes; and that the memoirs of Grey, Beaconsfield and Salisbury are now the only ones lacking to complete the authentic memoirs of the British prime ministers of the nineteenth century. For the period covered by these *Letters*, the memoir of Lord Derby is the only one that has not been published. The memoirs of Wellington, Peel, Melbourne, Palmerston, Russell, Aberdeen, Herbert, Granville, Argyll and Gladstone are all concerned with the period between 1837 and 1861, although up to 1861 six only of these statesmen had served as prime ministers. These memoirs, and many more of men who did not reach the highest rank among British statesmen, are supplemented by the *Letters of Queen Victoria*. Concerning Melbourne, Peel, Palmerston, Russell, Aberdeen and Derby, there is such a flood of new light on their characters, that much of the political history of England in the nineteenth century will now need revision.

Of the six prime ministers of the first third of the queen's reign Peel alone has his fame enhanced by the publication of these letters. Melbourne wilfully set the queen in hostility to Peel and the Tories who were in opposition when the new reign began. As is shown by his correspondence with Queen Victoria he deliberately created the difficulty in connection with the Ladies of the Bedchamber that resulted in Peel's failure to form an administration in 1839, and he thereby secured a further lease of life for his ministry. As unfolded in these letters, there can be few more discreditable intrigues in English politics of the nineteenth century than Melbourne's method of bringing about Peel's failure in 1839. But in May, 1841, Melbourne was again defeated in the House of Commons, and Peel was able to form an administration. Peel was in power until June, 1846. He was prime minister for five years. He was responsible for the greatest fiscal revolution of the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding the dread which the queen had felt at the incoming of Peel and the Tories—a dread for which Melbourne was chiefly responsible—and in spite of the fact that Melbourne contrary to the spirit of the constitution continued a confidential correspondence on state matters with the queen long after he had ceased to be prime minister, Peel quickly won the queen's confidence and esteem. The queen herself in 1899 admitted that she had been in the wrong in the Bedchamber question in 1839, and the correspondence which passed between the queen and Peel between 1841 and 1846, in conjunction with her high estimate of him, cannot fail to strengthen his position as the greatest British statesmen of the queen's long reign.

In all that goes to make a statesman, Peel in these pages, as in the Hansards, easily towers above Melbourne, Palmerston, Russell, Aberdeen and Derby. Palmerston's fame must suffer as much from the publication of the queen's letters as Melbourne's. They show him to have been without political principles—a politician who might just as easily have served at the head of a Tory as of a Whig administration.

He was overbearing and discourteous to the queen; and he was long one of the severest trials of the queen's political life. He was disloyal to his colleagues of the cabinet, as witness his rejoicing in private that the House of Lords had thrown out the bill for the abolition of the paper duties, although that bill was a government measure—an important part of the financial legislation of 1860, which Gladstone, his Chancellor of the Exchequer had carried by narrow majorities through the House of Commons. Ability is never denied to Palmerston, and he assiduously devoted himself to public business. But the impression left by his correspondence with the queen—a correspondence in which at times he was unwarrantably pert and flippant—is that he was a misfit in a country governed by Parliament, cabinet and the crown; and it is not difficult to understand why the third Earl Grey and other men in the front rank in politics hesitated or even refused to be associated with him in an administration. Russell, in these pages, is unstable and sometimes a schemer with vulgar aims of self-advancement; while of the amiable and easy-going Aberdeen, who was at the head of the coalition government that drifted into the Crimean War, and only just managed to blunder through it, his worth as a statesman, in a country famous for its commerce and industry, may be judged from the fact that he was too indolent to make up his mind whether protection was a right or a wrong policy, and he told his intimate friends that he had no convictions either way, because he could not understand the subject. Queen Victoria's reign is the most memorable in English history; but if Peel is excepted, it cannot be said that much of the glory was due to the premiers who served the queen between 1837 and 1861.

Next to the light which the *Letters* throw on the statesmen of the first twenty years of the reign, the *Letters* are valuable for the information with which they are heavily freighted concerning the relations of the cabinet to the crown. The letters and the memoranda prepared by the queen or the prince consort at each cabinet crisis bring out these relations in their constitutional aspects. Memoirs of cabinet ministers, published during the last thirty or forty years, had already furnished some insight into the relations of ministers to the sovereign; so had the constitutional histories. But in these *Letters of Queen Victoria* the relations of the sovereign to the cabinet, Parliament, the diplomatic service, the army and the navy, the church and the civil service, are for the first time set forth from the point of view of the sovereign. The same is true as regards the prerogative; for the queen was jealous of the prerogative; alert to repel any threatened invasion of it; and in her correspondence with her ministers, there is much that will serve to illuminate English constitutional history.

One of the remarkable revelations of these letters is the small degree to which the aristocratic classes were dislodged from political power by the Reform Act of 1832. It has been commonly accepted that middle-class influence was dominant in the elections to the House of Commons

from 1832 to 1867. There are few traces in these letters of the revolution which the Reform Act of 1832 has been held to have effected. Membership of administrations went almost as exclusively to the aristocracy as it had done before 1832, although both political parties at various times during the first twenty years of the queen's reign had difficulty in recruiting men with sufficient ability for public business to constitute their administrations. At one cabinet crisis, when it appeared that a Tory administration must come in, Derby told the queen that he had not men to form an administration. Yet it seldom seemed to occur to the leaders of either party that the middle-class men who supported them in the House of Commons—men who were accustomed to business—had any claim to cabinet rank. Milner' Gibson and Matthew Baines were of Whig administrations in the latter part of the period to which these letters belong; but only minor offices were assigned them. The great governing classes of English political tradition were still in full undisputed possession of their kingdom in the twenty years over which these letters extend; but the tradition of their ability, disinterestedness and integrity is sadly damaged by the disclosures of these volumes.

These volumes in no sense constitute a biography of Queen Victoria. They are made up entirely of letters and memoranda; but there is an adequate introduction to them, written by the editors with none of the formality that in the past characterized royal memoirs. The chapters are arranged by years. Each is preceded by a summary of the events of the year, written with much care and sufficiently full to meet the needs of most readers of the *Letters*; and in addition there are foot-notes wherever it seemed expedient to elucidate allusions and references in the text. The editing, in a word, is in keeping with the value and dignity of the work; and the framework ranks with that of Morly's *Life of Gladstone*.

The Roman Journals of Ferdinand Gregorovius (1852-1874).

Edited by FRIEDRICH ALTHAUS and translated from the second German edition by Mrs. GUSTAVUS W. HAMILTON. (London: George Bell and Sons. 1907. Pp. xxiv, 473.)

It is unfortunate that so interesting a diary as that kept by Gregorovius during the period which produced his masterpiece, the *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, should have been so carelessly edited, both in the original German editions of 1892 and 1893, in the Italian translation of 1895 and in this belated English translation of 1907. The gross carelessness in the spelling of proper names, which characterized the German editions, has marred in even greater degree the volume of Mrs. Hamilton, whose ignorance of historical events in modern Italy has also allowed her to fall into unpardonable errors of translation. Thus she designates Atto Vannucci as *Vannuccio*, makes Persano block the French fleet instead of the Neapolitan harbor of